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ABSTRACT

A task force was created to establish a collaborative relationship among government, education, private agencies, and employers for transition services for special education students. Findings were that unemployment and underemployment were extremely high for special education graduates who lacked adequate basic, job-seeking, and work skills. Few options were available for pursuing education beyond high school. Many graduates did not know how to make effective use of available adult services, nor how to find special services for disabled adults. Parents were uninformed about work or education options, service providers were not well informed about school services and potential client needs, and employers did not know where to find disabled job applicants or obtain services to help them adapt jobs. Legislation lacked a unified approach to transition services. Action recommendations were made to the school system and county government to create a transition service delivery system. Four components of the school transition service were planning, instruction, linking, and staff development. Four components of the county government system were planning and coordination, program expansion and improvement, business linkages, and legislative advocacy. (An executive summary precedes the report. Appendixes include table of contents of task force reports, list of transition programs researched by the committees, selected materials and resources, a list of task force members, and a glossary.) (YLB)

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Final Report of the Task Force on the Transition From School to Work For Montgomery County Students With Disabilities

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Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County Government

Rockville, Maryland

Report of the Task Force on the Transition from School to Work for Montgomery County Students with Disabilities

Wilmer S. Cody
Superintendent of Schools

Charles L. Gilchrist
County Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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I. INTRODUCTION

On November 26, 1984, County Executive Charles Gilchrist and MCPS Superintendent Wilmer Cody created a task force on the Transition from School to Work for Montgomery County Public School Students with Disabilities. The group received the following charge:

> "to establish a collaborative relationship among government, education, private agencies, and employers which will facilitate the development, implementation, and evaluation of model transition services that increase opportunities for fully competitive or supported competitive employment for MCPS special education students."

This document describes activities and findings of the task force and presents recommendations for Montgomery County Public Schools and the Montgomery County Government. Appendices contain a glossary of terms as well as lists of supporting information. Detailed data are available upon request from the Department of Family Resources, Montgomery County Government.

II. DEFINITION OF TRANSITION

The task force agreed on the following definition of transition:

Transition from school to work for students with disabilities is a three-step process involving a) school instruction, b) effective planning for the movement from school to work, and c) the availability of appropriate options for meaningful work.

From preschool to graduation, school instruction provides the foundation for independent living in the adult world and includes a functional curriculum appropriate to the student's need provided in an integrated school environment and augmented with community-based instructional experiences.

Planning for the movement from school to work is an ongoing process that becomes formalized at least three to five years before the student leaves school and results in an individualized plan which is updated at least annually. The planning process involves the student, school, parents, and community agencies responsible for providing the necessary adult services. Planning also involves employers and takes into account employment opportunities in the community as well as meaningful post-secondary education and training options for the student.

Meaningful work options may include:

- Competitive employment, with or without support services
- Supervised work in community or business settings
- Specialized industrial contracts in the community
- Sheltered workshops used as a transition to community programming
- Work carried out in home settings

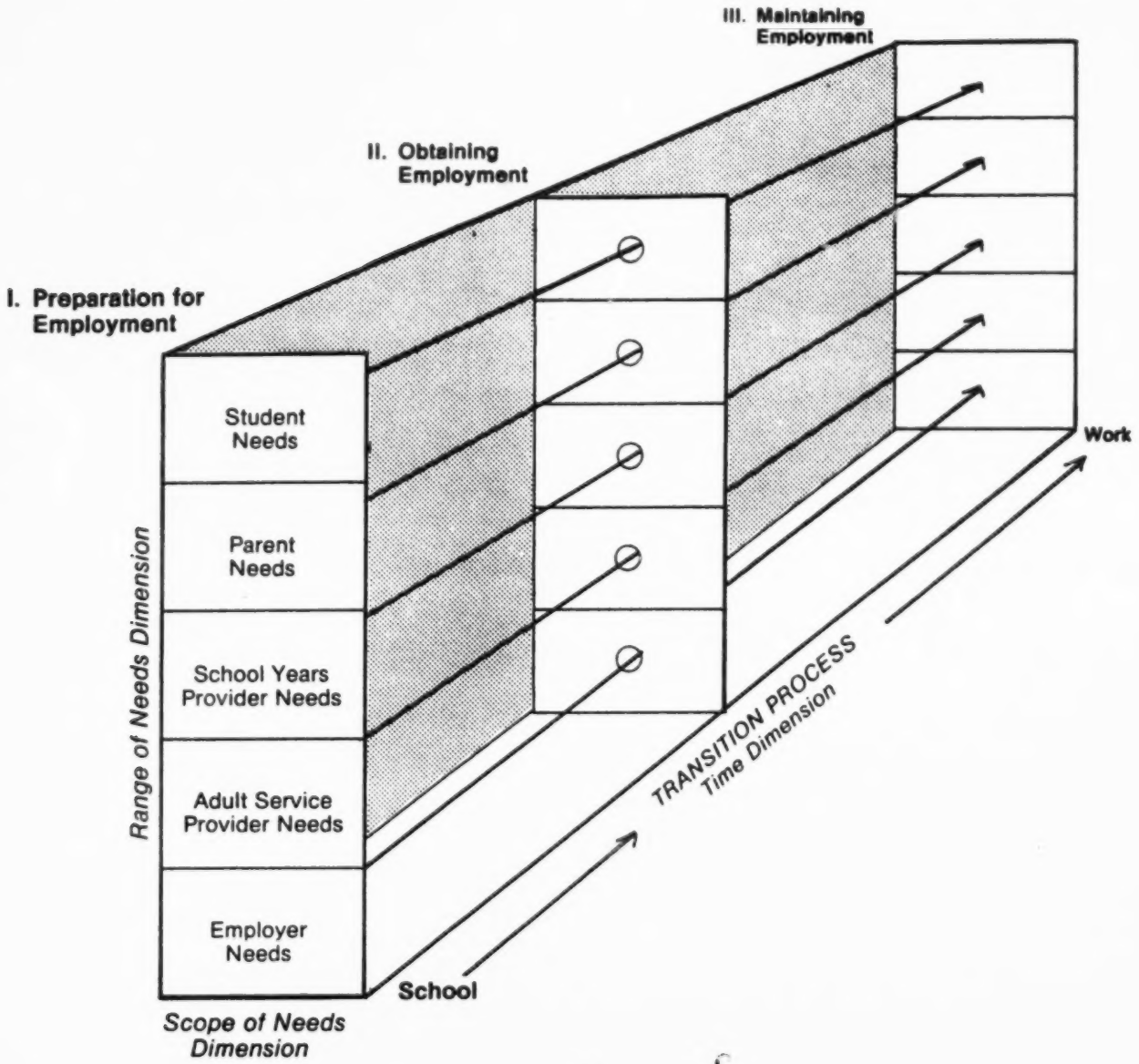
The least restrictive environment concept guides the selection of the appropriate setting.

Support services may be time-limited or ongoing. They may include short-term help with job preparation, job seeking, initial adjustment and interpersonal relations on the job site. Ongoing services may include on-the-job training and job support for as long as necessary and long-term follow-up services to assure that a person keeps the job or finds a new one if necessary.

The goal of the transition process is to assure meaningful work that provides adequate compensation in terms of income, job satisfaction, and opportunity for personal growth and independence for each person with a disability.

For those few persons whose disability is so severe that work is not a realistic option, the goal of transition is to provide placement in a medical/social day program with opportunities for personal development and acceptance as a member of the community.

The following model illustrates the transition concept.



III. ASSUMPTIONS

The task force also developed the following series of assumptions as a basis for recommendations:

- Transition planning must lead to a continuum of services of sufficient quality and quantity to make possible the attainment of transition goals.
- For many students with disabilities, transition can be accomplished by assisting them to use their own resources or those generally available to all citizens.
- In transition, the approach to employment must be businesslike. Planning must consider employer requirements and incentives and must assure that employer efforts are effectively recognized.
- Transition planners must consider that for students with disabilities there are disincentives to paid employment, e.g., loss of federal benefits.

IV. FINDINGS

A. Unmet Needs

About 800 special education students graduate from MCPS each June. While some may have relatively few difficulties in going on to further education or in finding work, studies and experience shows that unemployment and underemployment is extremely high for these graduates as a whole. Nationally, it is estimated that between 50 and 80 percent of working-age adults who report a disability are jobless. No follow-up data exist on all MCPS special education graduates, but the data that do exist show that many students have extreme difficulties in entering the work force and in remaining employed or in obtaining appropriate employment support services.

Graduates tend to lack adequate basic skills, job-seeking skills, work skills, and appropriate work behaviors. Few students have had useful on-the-job training experiences while in school. Most students with severe disabilities have few, if any, community work experiences essential to preparing them for work.

For many students with disabilities, few if any options are available for pursuing education beyond high school. Post-secondary institutions do not have the same comprehensive federal mandate to educate individuals with disabilities as the school

---

1. U.S. Commission of Civil Rights, 1983.
2. Of the 1979-82 mentally retarded and multiply handicapped graduates, only about 20 percent were employed, according to the report by the Superintendent's Task Force on the Future of the Schools for the Moderately and Severely/Profoundly Mentally Retarded.

   A Department of Educational Accountability study of 175 Level 5 1983 graduates shows that more than 30 percent are unemployed.

system does and therefore may not be sufficiently sensitive to their needs. Some students find jobs but are unable to keep them because there are no employment support services that they can turn to to mediate employer/employee problems.

Many do not know how to make effective use of generally available adult services nor how to find special services available to adults with disabilities. For some of these services there are long waiting lists because the funding for services is insufficient. Other needed services are nonexistent.

Parents are uninformed about work or education options for their children and about available services. Service providers are not well informed about school services and about potential client needs because there is no effective linking mechanism. Employers do not know where to find job applicants who are disabled nor how to obtain the services that would help them adapt the job to the abilities of the applicant. As a result of these shortcomings, many special education graduates cannot find or keep meaningful jobs that provide adequate compensation in terms of income, job satisfaction, and opportunity for personal growth and independence.

For the most severely handicapped graduates, there are not enough medical/social day programs. Their only option is to stay at home. This has often a devastating effect on the entire family. Detailed information on the nationwide unemployment problem of persons with disabilities can be found in Appendix H of the report.

In the area of legislation, the task force also found that a unified approach is needed to attain statutory and regulatory improvements to further employment of persons with disabilities, and to eliminate disincentives. The task force further determined that Montgomery County does not have a complete system for planning and delivering the continuum of transition services.

B. Characteristics of Exemplary Transition Programs

The task force reviewed 70 existing transition programs to identify exemplary practices that could serve as a model for Montgomery County and identified the following common characteristics of examplary programs.

- A cooperative service delivery system that continually involves the resources of vocational education, special education, guidance, and vocational rehabilitation working in collaboration with parents, the business community, government and community agencies.

- Viewing the education system as the agent of preparation for work and independent living through social skills training and an employment oriented curriculum, long-term planning for the student, and an emphasis on the experiential.

- Training and job placement in nonsegregated, community environments with an emphasis on normalizing and "real job" experiences.

- Employer needs identified and met through the use of employer specific training projects, task analysis and restructuring, fulfillment of job requirements for as long as necessary through one-on-one, on-the-job support and appropriate work site supervision.

- Continuous employer involvement in design of training, implementation of employment service procedures, and oversight and evaluation of program effectiveness.

- Trained and motivated personnel in the roles of counselors, job developers, case managers, job coaches, employment advocates, and other staff positions.

- An emphasis on achieving a high level of public understanding and public awareness through continuing outreach to families and community

- A vision of transition that incorporates creative, flexible, nontraditional approaches guided by ongoing program evaluation

- Dynamic, motivated, dedicated, diplomatic, experienced, and innovative leaders

- A clear philosophical base which guides transition programming at all levels, incorporating attitudes and approaches which foster self-respect, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-determination

V. CONCLUSIONS

The task force concluded that the following direct services are needed:

1. Academic, career and vocational education to prepare all special education students for adult life (Limited availability at present time)

2. Flexibility and adaptations in post-secondary job training programs designed for the general population so that they can serve special education graduates who can benefit from them (Very limited at present time)

3. Generic employment services with flexibility and adaptations to serve a wider range of persons with disabilities (Very limited availability)

4. Intake mechanism for referral to services for graduates (No comprehensive service now available)

5. On-going service coordination when needed (Now available only for some clients)

6. Specialized training in work habits and skills (Limited availability)

7. Specialized job training, including on-the-job training (OJT) (Limited availability)

8. Specialized employment services with short-term follow-up (Very limited availability)

9. Long-term supported employment services (Extremely limited availability)

10. Service to employers (public and business) for job adaptation and restructuring and for orientation of supervisors (Very limited availability)

11. Centralized job and employer development and information service, i.e., "job bank" (Not available)

The task force further concluded that to bring about these services, the following are needed:

- Coordination and consistent direction for the activities of MCPS, Montgomery County Government, adult service providers, parents and employers
- A mechanism for linking all concerned sectors
- Action by county government to obtain funds for expansion of the above direct services
- Input from business so that transition services will be responsive to business requirements
- Business aid in terms of job opportunities and financial support
- Efforts towards needed regulatory and administrative changes and to obtain needed funds
- Public information to enlist support for transition goals

It was evident to the task force that no piecemeal effort would suffice to address all the identified needs. The critical analysis of existing transition efforts in other communities convinced the task force that only a comprehensive effort would fulfill its charge. Therefore, the task force recommends creation of two systems: 1) an MCPS system to prepare special education students for employment and for linking them and their parents to post-secondary services and employment and 2) a countywide system of post-secondary transition services for which the Montgomery County government should assume primary responsibility. In addition to the two systems, a mechanism should be created to assure continued progress and consistency of direction. This mechanism should provide coordination and communication within the two systems and between the two systems and the many government agencies, service providers, parents, consumers and employers who play an important part in the transition process. The following pages list action recommendations to MCPS and the Montgomery County Government as well as options for creating the coordinating mechanism and priorities recommended for FY 86.

VI. ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

To provide comprehensive, systemwide programs and services to enable all special education students to make a successful transition from school to meaningful work and community participation, MCPS should create a transition service delivery system with four components: 1) planning 2) instruction 3) linking and 4) staff development. The staff development component undergirds the entire system. The system should exhibit characteristics of exemplary programs identified by the task force, and listed on page 4.

To develop and implement this system MCPS should take the following steps:

1. By October 1, 1985, establish and staff a fulltime transition coordinator position with sufficient authority to obtain the cooperation of all pertinent MCPS units. The whole effort should have the expressed support of the Board of Education and the superintendent.

2. The transition coordinator should appoint a steering committee no later than November 1, 1985, to provide interdisciplinary and interagency advice on all activities. Committee members should include representatives from regular, special and vocational education, staff development, guidance and the MCPS Department of Personnel Services, as well as parents, representatives of adult education and service providers, and employers.

3. The steering committee should develop a process to consult with staff and the community groups represented by the steering committee to ensure broad-based support for all transition activities.

4. The transition coordinator, in collaboration with selected staff groups and with the advice of the steering committee should develop the recommended transition system model for approval by the superintendent no later than February 1, 1986. Program information collected by the task force should be used in developing the system.

5. The transition coordinator, in collaboration with the steering committee, should develop a collaborative process for determining unmet needs in relation to the transition model and should recommend and get approval for prioritized implementation plans. These plans should include comprehensive and ongoing staff development needed to implement the system. They should also include outcome measures for each objective and a process for monitoring and evaluating them. Evaluation results should be reported to the superintendent annually.

6. Implementation plans should include realistic budgets and time lines.

7. MCPS should offer more On-the-Job-Training slots, and job-site supervisors should be trained so that students will be adequately supervised. Where possible successful graduates of such programs should be employed by MCPS.

8. To chart the progress of transition efforts, MCPS follow-up studies of special education graduates should obtain qualitative as well as quantitative data on graduates, e.g., post-secondary training, type of jobs, hours worked, wages and agencies involved.

9. To implement the parent objectives of the linking component, systematic support should be offered to parents no later than June 1986. MCPS, in cooperation with existing community groups, should help parents make timely educational decisions and determine and attain postschool options for their sons and daughters. Workshops, whether offered by MCPS or by other agencies in collaboration with MCPS and the local business community, should be planned so that they are accessible and understandable to all parents.

10. To implement the adult service provider objectives of the system, MCPS should view the adult education and service provider community as an important resource and should create an effective, mutually agreed upon working relationship.

11. To implement the employer objectives of the system, MCPS should develop a plan to expand its present relationships with employers and employer organizations so that employers become increasingly aware of the benefits of employing individuals with disabilities and become more responsive to their needs. MCPS should base work-related instruction, On-Job-Training activities, and adaptations to vocational courses on employer expertise so that employers would find it easier to employ more MCPS special education graduates.

Priorities for FY 86

During FY 86, initial priority should be given to the following:

1. **Include career/employability components in IEP planning initially for eighth grade Level 4 and 5 students (and as soon as possible for all special education students).**

2. **Focus instruction for Level 4 and 5 students on social skill goals in their IEPs, and provide training for teachers in how to use existing social skills curriculum materials.**

3. **Provide job counseling for Level 4 and 5 students graduating in 1986 and 1987 which would assure that they and their parents are linked to post-secondary services, as needed.**

4. **Review the IEPs of all 11th and 12th grade special education students and provide work experiences for those who need them, to the extent that resources are available and program adjustments can be made.**

5. **Develop in-school work experience sites and, where resources permit, offer community work experiences.**

VII. ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The Montgomery county government should provide the overall leadership for implementation of a comprehensive and cooperative transition system providing post-secondary education, employment, and job training services to special education graduates. This system should be based on effective interagency communication and a coordinated approach to program planning and service delivery and should include the resources of education, county government, state government, and adult service providers. The system should also involve parents and seek the resources of the business community. The system should exhibit characteristics of exemplary transition programs, identified by the task force, and listed on page 4.

Given the recommended mission of county government, the task force concludes that a prerequisite for accomplishing this mission is the creation of a coordinating agency. The task force believes that the county government has three options to create this mechanism:

1. Create a transition services unit within County Government using county/MCPS staff to plan and coordinate the delivery of transition services

2. Develop a request for proposal (RFP) and use the County's procurement process to contract out the functions of planning and coordinating the delivery of transition services

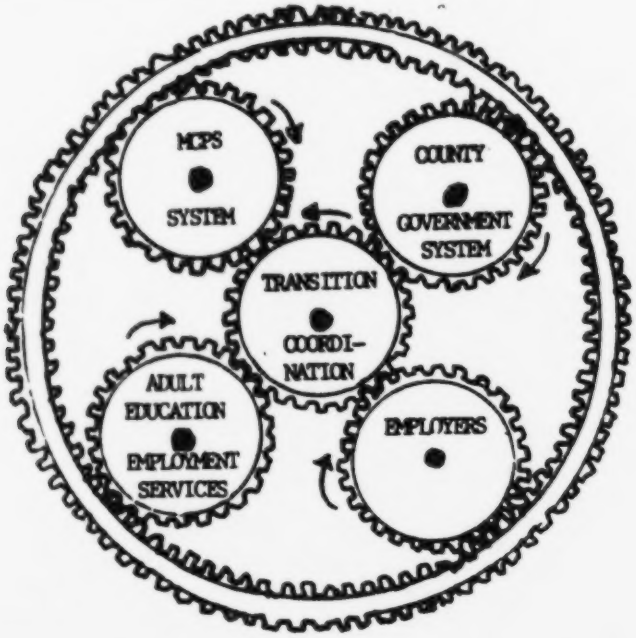
3. Help fund and support a public nonprofit corporation to coordinate the planning and delivery of transition services

The first two options are self explanatory. The third option which the task force favors is less well defined and the task force went to some length to describe it more fully. Some of the details are presented here with more in the complete report.

The task force believes that the function of the nonprofit corporation should be to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate the actions required to reach the transition goal. It should be governed by a governing board that would have responsibility for establishing, implementing, and monitoring policy, and one or more advisory panels that would provide advice on professional and programmatic needs. The governing board would represent business, industry, finance, academia, and the professions. The advisory panel(s) would represent parents, special education, rehabilitation, adult service providers, and employers. The corporation could respond quickly to requests for proposals, accept contributions of funds, services, or materials, and engage in creative cooperative efforts with other organizations. Initial funding for staff could come from county monies targeted for transition use. Additional "loaned" staff could be sought from MCPS, the county, the state DVR, and corporations such as IBM which have executive loan programs. Initial staff would include a director and a secretary/administrative assistant.

The task force has developed sample bylaws, a copy of which is available upon request from the Department of Family Resources. The index of the bylaw can be found in the appendix of the report.

Whichever option the county chooses, the coodinating agency should undertake activities to augment, expand, modify or support existing government services and maintain a strong link with MCPS. The following diagram attempts to illustrate the task force's view of the integrated transition system.



To develop and implement this system the Montgomery County Government should take the following steps:

1. The county executive should appoint a steering committee by October 1, 1985, to provide technical support/interagency advice to the Department of Family Resources on how to create a coordinating mechanism. Committee members should include representatives from MCPS, Montgomery College, employers, parents, adult services providers and relevant county departments.

2. A process should be developed by the steering committee by November 1, 1985 to consult with staff and the community groups represented by the steering committee to ensure broad-based support for all transition activities.

3. Montgomery County Government in collaboration with the steering committee should develop the recommended transition coordinating model for approval by the county executive by January 1, 1986.

4. Montgomery County Government, with the advice of the steering committee, should determine how to use the $60,000 now in FY 86 designated county government surplus.

5. Montgomery County Government, with the advice of the steering committee should develop a collaborative process for determining unmet needs in relation to the transition model and should recommend prioritized implementation plans.

Priorities for FY 86

While the task force believes that the creation of a coordinating mechanism is essential, it also recognizes that it will take time to establish a coordinating agency. In the meantime, the task force recommends that, during FY 86, Montgomery County Government give initial priority to the following areas:

- **Coordination**

  1. **Develop and implement uniform admissions procedures for all county funded transition services**

  2. **Develop a single point of entry for individuals needing transition services**

  3. **Set an example by increasing work experience/OJT positions that lead to permanent employment**

  4. **Identify existing employment support services to mediate simple employer/ employee problems**

- **Post-secondary Education**

  5. **Assist Montgomery College to adapt college programs to better serve special education graduates**

- **Funding**

  6. **Identify additional county funds for transition services in integrated settings for MCPS special education graduates**

  7. **Establish a process for matching Montgomery County Government funds with transition funds obtained from other sources**

- **Business Linkages**

  8. **Help employers find prospective employees with disabilities who are or who can be trained to become qualified**

9. Provide orientation to employers and employees on working effectively with co-workers with disabilities

10. Meet with employer and trade organizations to obtain up-to-date information on employment needs

11. Explore with the business community joint funding possibilities to enhance transition services

12. Explore incentives to business to increase opportunities for work experience and OJT

13. Contract for a professional public relations campaign to encourage and recognize successful employment of special education graduates

Legislative Advocacy

14. Actively support legislative and regulatory changes that facilitate transition

15. Work with state officials to obtain more funds for transition services

VIII. OUTCOMES

Follow-up studies conducted jointly by MCPS and the Montgomery County Government should measure the transition system's effectiveness. The following is an example of how these studies should indicate goal achievement:

Outcome Measures

Goals	Graduate Follow-up Indicators
Adequate preparation for post-secondary training/careers/work/job maintenance	° More graduates receiving appropriate training ° More graduates employed ° Those employed hold better jobs
Graduates linked with needed services	° Increased satisfaction of graduates with referrals ° More graduates with satisfactory realistic service contracts
Sufficient adult job services	° Fewer people on waiting list ° Less time on waiting list
More community placements for inappropriately segregated graduates	° Fewer sheltered placements

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I. INTRODUCTION

On November 26, 1984, County Executive Charles Gilchrist and MCPS Superintendent Wilmer Cody created a task force on the Transition from School to Work for Montgomery County Public School Students with Disabilities. The group received the following charge:

> "to establish a collaborative relationship among government, education, private agencies, and employers which will facilitate the development, implementation, and evaluation of model transition services that increase opportunities for fully competitive or supported competitive employment for MCPS special education students."

This document describes activities and findings of the task force and presents recommendations for Montgomery County Public Schools and the Montgomery County Government. Appendices contain a glossary of terms as well as lists of supporting information. Detailed data are available upon request from the Department of Family Resources, Montgomery County Government.

The county executive and the school superintendent also established the following guiding principles for the task force:

> Students with disabilities should be encouraged to become as independent as possible and should be as involved as possible in making decisions affecting their lives. Further, such persons should live and work in an environment which fosters progress towards greater independence and self-sufficiency.
>
> Major employers, including government, private business, and industry, can play an important role in assisting in the development of a continuum of appropriate transition services which will lead to employment and successful employment maintenance. This continuum is broad and includes, in addition to employment opportunities, advice and counsel on training, employment counseling, job-seeking skills, work experience, and successful employment practices.
>
> Generic services (should) be available to and utilized by individuals with disabilities. These include public transportation, employment services, education and career planning, recreation, and other services that serve the public generally.
>
> This task force (is established) in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration with existing private and public agencies in Montgomery County that have an interest in and can contribute to the successful attainment of the task force purposes.

Task force members were jointly appointed. (See Appendix A for committee membership). They represent education, government, adult service providers, parents, and employers. Employer representatives were invited because it was recognized that business and industry play an important role in developing transition services and that successful service delivery requires the collaboration of all the included groups.

II. TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

The task force established three working committees and one steering committee (see Appendix B for committee membership), Committee objectives were:

- Committee 1: Specify the problems, i.e., identify needs and service gaps.
- Committee 2: Identify programmatic solutions, i.e., study model programs.
- Committee 3: Identify legislative solutions.
- Steering Committee: Coordinate the work of the task force.

Committees met weekly or biweekly with a series of small groups working together between meetings. Activities included review of literature and published documents; contacts with businesses, service providers, services users, and the public, agency personnel, and legislators; and meetings with knowledgeable individuals. Committee meetings were used to determine the process and format for data collection and to coordinate committee efforts.

All meetings were open to the public and interested persons came regularly as observers and contributors. Communication was continuous and the level of involvement and cooperation on the part of all concerned was exceptional. Task force members, staff, and observers have devoted hundreds of hours to completing subcommittee reports. The complexity of the charge began to emerge as issues were identified and the need to build consensus and a common understanding of the goals was addressed. To that end, the task force developed additional guiding principles, defined its work focus, delineated assumptions that underlie its work, and conceptualized the transition process.

ADDITIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The task force added the following principles to those established by Mr. Gilchrist and Dr. Cody:

- Persons with disabilities shall be treated with dignity and respect and provided every possible opportunity to live full and meaningful lives.
- Persons with disabilities shall not be segregated or isolated from community participation or from interactions with their peers that may be vital for the life-long process of growth and development.
- Perhaps more than anything, the opportunity to work and to be productive legitimizes a person's place in the community and contributes to the sense of self-worth.
- Almost all individuals with disabilities, including those with severe disabilities, can perform meaningful work and, with supportive services, most can work in the community.

WORKING FOCUS

To establish a clear working focus the task force determined that:

- The main purpose of the task force is to recommend transition services leading from school to work. Other issues, e.g., housing or transportation, are ancillary and will be mentioned but will not be addressed in depth.

- The target population is all special education students, i.e., all handicapping conditions from mild to severe/profound.

- Transition is an ongoing process that becomes formalized several years before students leave school and should include preparation for employment, support for obtaining employment, and support for maintaining employment. For persons who need permanent employment support, transition would include linking them to ongoing services.

ASSUMPTIONS

The task force also developed a series of assumptions as a basis for recommendations. These are the following:

- Transition planning must lead to a continuum of services of sufficient quality and quantity to make possible the attainment of transition goals.

- For many students with disabilities, transition can be accomplished by assisting them to use their own resources or those generally available to all citizens.

- The approach to employment must be businesslike. Planning must take into account employer requirements and incentives and must assure that employer efforts are effectively recognized.

- Transition planners must consider that for students with disabilities there are disincentives to paid employment, e.g., loss of federal benefits.

DEFINITION OF TRANSITION

The task force agreed on the following definition of transition:

> Transition from school to work for students with disabilities is a three-step process involving a) school instruction, b) effective planning for the movement from school to work, and c) the availability of appropriate options for meaningful work.
>
> School instruction, from preschool to graduation, provides the foundation for independent living in the adult world and includes a functional curriculum appropriate to the student's need provided in an integrated school environment and augmented with community-based instructional experiences.
>
> Planning for the movement from school to work, is an ongoing process that becomes formalized at least three to five years before the student leaves school and results in an individualized plan which is updated at least annually. The planning process involves the student, school, parents, and community agencies responsible for providing the necessary adult services. Planning also involves employers and takes into account employment opportunities in the community as well as meaningful post-secondary education and training options for the student.

Meaningful work options may include:

- Competitive employment, with or without support services
- Supervised work in community or business settings
- Specialized industrial contracts in the community
- Sheltered workshops used as a transition to community programming
- Work carried out in home settings

The least restrictive environment concept guides the selection of the appropriate setting.

Support services may be time-limited or ongoing. They may include short-term help with job preparation, job seeking, initial adjustment and inter-personal relations on the job site. On-going services may include on-the-job training and job support for as long as necessary and long-term follow-up services to assure that a person keeps the job or finds a new one if necessary.

The goal of the transition is to assure meaningful work that provides adequate compensation in terms of income, job satisfaction and opportunity for personal growth and independence for each person with a disability.

For those few persons whose disability is so severe that work is not a realistic option, the goal of transition is to provide placement in a medical/social day program with opportunities for personal development and acceptance as a member of the community.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL TRANSITION MODEL

To illustrate its definition of transition and to link the need for transition services in Montgomery County to a service delivery system, the task force conceptualized a needs driven transition model. This model consists of three interrelated elements or dimensions as follows:

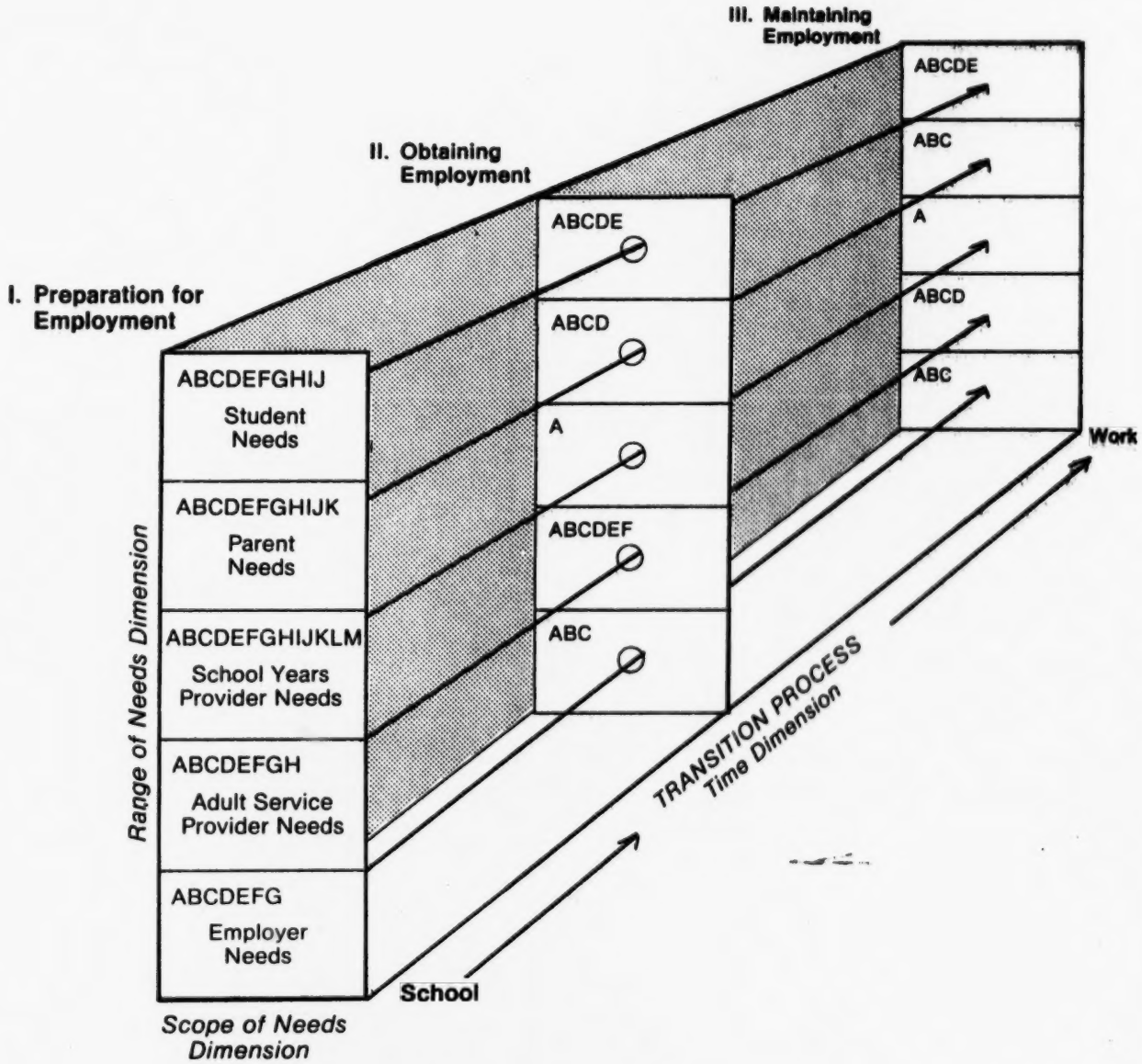
1. Time - The transition process takes place over a time period which may vary in length but includes three phases: preparation for employment, obtaining employment, and maintaining employment. These phases are not discrete but, rather, sequentially blend one to another as in a continuum.

2. Range of Needs - The model lists the five primary constituencies for which needs have been articulated. They are students, parents, school years services providers (including post-secondary education), adult years services providers, and employers. The task force recognizes that there may be additional constituencies with needs and that the five primary ones listed might be further divided into subgroups. The range of needs remains consistent through the three phases of the transition process.

3. Scope of Needs - The model defines the specific needs of each constituent group at given points in time on the transition process continuum. It should be recognized that the scope of needs expands or contracts for each constituent group with respect to specific phases in the transition process. For example, the needs of school-year providers during the preparation for employment phase of the transition process are much greater than those during the maintaining employment phase for which education has no formal responsibility.

The three-dimensional model with its needs statements depict a highly structured process. It is presented in this manner to assist the reader in visualizing the comprehensive transition process. In practice, the transition process is geared very much to the unique needs and capabilities of each individual student and requires individualized planning.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL TRANSITION MODEL



A SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEM NEEDS WHICH DEFINE THE PARAMETERS OF A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I Preparation for Employment

STUDENT NEEDS

A. Mastery of basic literacy skills

B. Opportunities to learn and practice social and interpersonal skills

C. Awareness of career possibilities

D. Assistance in vocational decision making including:
- Career interest
- Career aptitude
- Job requirements
- Occupational outlook
- Job/career exploration

E. Assistance and training in preemployment skills such as:
- Use of transportation
- Use of community resources
- Understanding of labor market
- Job seeking skills (how to find a job opening)
- Applications and resume preparation and use
- Interviewing preparation and techniques
- Work place behaviors/habits
- Job coping

F Awareness of and assistance in assuring legal rights

G Opportunities for meaningful employment experiences such as:
- Volunteering
- Internship
- On-the-job training
- Part-time and summer employment

H Referral to appropriate other services

I Case management

J Assistance with preemployment physical evaluation

PARENT NEEDS

A. Assistance in developing for their children expectations which are optimally realistic and reasonable

B. Awareness of potential careers

C. Assistance with career exploration and decision making

D. An understanding of education options available

E. Knowledge of and access to community resources including:
- Postsecondary training
- Adult services

F. An understanding of the labor market

G. An understanding of employment barriers such as:
- Prejudice/discrimination
- Inaccessibility
- Lack of work place accommodations
- Artificial barriers, i.e., certification

H. Understanding of legal rights/moral responsibility

I. Assistance in adjusting to change in the life of their child

J. Awareness and acceptance of employment requirements such as:
- Functional skills
- Behaviors

K. Referral to appropriate other services

SCHOOL YEARS* PROVIDER NEEDS

A. Assistance in developing expectations for students which are optimally realistic and reasonable

B. Ability to adjust to change

C. Awareness of career possibilities

D. Capability and resources for career decision making and career exploration

E. Knowledge of employment requirements such as:
- Employer expectations
- Functional skills
- Behaviors

F. Ability to evaluate job skills

G. Capability to provide educational options—secondary and postsecondary

H. Ability to understand and use available services

I. An understanding of labor market

J. An understanding of employment barriers

K. Knowledge of and access to community resources

L. Understanding of legal rights/social responsibility

M. Capability to refer student/parent to appropriate other service

ADULT SERVICE** PROVIDER NEEDS

A. Optimal realistic and reasonable expectations for the student

B. Understanding of school years service system

C. Ability to provide consultation to school system

D. An understanding of employers' needs

E. Ability to perform and understand labor market analysis

F. Ability to perform and understand job analysis

G. Ability to arrange and support various employment experiences

H. Understanding of legal rights/social responsibility

EMPLOYER NEEDS

A. Disability awareness and sensitivity on the part of:
- Employer
- Coworkers

B. An understanding of abilities/potential of students with disabilities

C. An understanding of all types of barriers to employment

D. Assistance with job accommodation

E. Awareness of incentives such as:
- Financial, i.e., TJTC, OJT subsidies
- productivity/stability

F. Support services such as:
- Consultation
- Job modification
- Assistive devices

G. Knowledge of legal rights/social responsibility

*All those persons who provide educational and other services, such as health and rehabilitation to students during their school years including postsecondary education.

**Agencies or individuals serving adults with disabilities such as vocational rehabilitation or residential assistance services.

II. Support for Obtaining Employment

STUDENT NEEDS

A. Knowledge of current employment opportunities

B. Opportunity to develop additional skills/training

C. Support for:
- Conducting a job search
- Preparation of an application/ resume
- Interviewing preparation aod techniques
- Training in work place behaviors/ habits
- Job referral placement

D. Opportunity for employment experiences such as:
- Volunteering
- Internship
- On-the-job training
- Part time employment

E. Access to case management services

PARENT NEEDS

A. Assistance in understanding child's job readiness

B. Awareness of job requirements

C. Ability to understand and use available services such as:
- Education
- Training
- Support

D Ability to understand and use legal rights

SCHOOL YEARS PROVIDER NEEDS

Follow-up information on referral

ADULT SERVICE PROVIDER NEEDS

A. Appropriate referrals including complete information from MCPS

B. Capability to obtain and maintain current labor market analysis

C. Skill in job matching including school system
- Employer needs
- Employment requirements
- Client abilities/barriers

D. Skill in implementing job accommodations

E. Ability to consult with school system and employer

F. Capability to provide job development/job placement services

EMPLOYER NEEDS

A. Increased sensitivity to working with applicants with disabilities

B. Understanding of potential applicants characteristics

C. Support for hiring decisions including:
- Restructuring of tasks
- Obtaining financial incentives
- training disabled employees
- Preparing coworkers

D. Assistance to locate applicants with disabilities

III. Support for Maintaining Employment

STUDENT NEEDS

A. Training for specific job

B. On-the-job support to cope with:
- Skill deficiency
- Work behavior
- Social/emotional concerns
- Transportation, etc.

C. Access to job advocacy services for:
- Crisis intervention
- Counseling

D. Exposure to appropriate role models

E. Assistance in changing jobs
- More appropriate placement
- Upgrade

PARENT NEEDS

A. Ability to provide moral and emotional support

B. Ability to help, if indicated, with such needs as transportation, financial support, and health care

C. Ability to "let go" and support child's independent functioning

SCHOOL YEARS PROVIDER NEEDS

Access to selected follow-up/follow-along data

ADULT SERVICE PROVIDER NEEDS

A. Ability to provide support to employer and employee such as:
- Counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Teaching of skills and job behaviors
- Support for coworkers

B. Ability to monitor employee progress

C. Ability to arrange job changes/shifts within place of employment or to a different employer

D. Ability to maintain a positive relationship with employee and employer

EMPLOYER NEEDS

A. Acceptance of employee with disability

B. Acceptance and appropriate use of support services

C. Understanding of benefits of having workers with disabilities such as:
- Tax advantages
- Employee quality

III. SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE FINDINGS

A. EXISTING PROGRAMS AND PROGRAM GAPS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY (Index to report in Appendix C)

The three dimensional transition model was used to classify existing programs and program gaps. Information was collected in the Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, adult employment and training services, ancillary Montgomery County Government services and the business sector.

1. Montgomery County Public Schools

In 1984, MCPS had a student body of about 92,000. Of these, about 12 percent received special education services. At the secondary school level, grades 7-12, close to 5,000 students were enrolled in special education programs with 1,000 students at the 12th grade level, which includes students up to age 21. The following table provides 1984 enrollment details:

TABLE 1

Secondary Students With Handicaps in MCPS and Nonpublic Placements By Handicapping Condition

Gr.	Mental Retarded MCPS	NP	Hard of Hearing MCPS	NP	Deaf MCPS	NP	Speech/ Language MCPS	NP	Vision Handi. MCPS	NP	Ser. Emot. Dist. MCPS	NP	Ortho. Imp. MCPS	NP	Other Health Imp. MCPS	NP	Spec. Learning Disc. MCPS	NP	Multi. Handi. MCPS	NP	TOTAL MCPS
7	36	2	7	-	8	-	100	3	4	-	41	2	9	-	0	-	545	1	33	3	794
8	34	2	7	-	5	-	74	4	9	-	74	5	7	1	1	-	631	4	19	1	878
9	50	2	6	-	9	-	53	1	5	-	87	10	3	-	1	1	523	1	34	5	791
10	49	10	12	-	10	-	56	1	9	-	92	7	7	-	4	-	478	-	43	4	782
11	38	4	3	-	11	-	43	-	4	-	84	8	3	-	1	-	439	1	39	5	683
12	200	29	8	1	13	-	32	4	15	-	118	21	5	-	2	2	470	5	59	17	1001
TOTAL	407	49	43	1	56	-	358	13	46	-	496	53	34	1	9	3	3086	12	227	35	4929

MCPS services are provided on a six-level continuum with approximately one-half of the secondary students on the first three, less intensive service levels and the other half fairly evenly divided between the more intensive levels, i.e., special classes (Level 4) and special centers (Level 5). A detailed description of the continuum can be found in Appendix F.

The task force found that generalizations as to type of services offered and severity of need at each continuum level are not meaningful because needs and services vary among disability categories. For example, both the seriously emotionally disturbed student with an IQ of 120 and the profoundly mentally retarded student who is learning to feed herself are Level 5 students.

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The task force was not able to obtain a clear and precise picture of existing MCPS transitional services. Services that are provided, e.g., vocational instruction and in-school jobs, are part of the instructional program and there are no ready records on how many special education students participate in these activities. Moreover, MCPS does not yet have a process for determining unmet transition needs. However, informal data collection and contacts with program administrators and parents revealed significant disparity between the ability of programs to provide needed services. It appears that a few students make an effective transition when they leave school; but for the majority, existing services are either inadequate or not available at all.

Highlights of additional findings include:

- Students need more and earlier career awareness so that they can begin to understand the world of work while they are still in school. Such awareness may increase student receptiveness to learning appropriate work behaviors and attitudes.

- Additional and more focused career exploration is needed in collaboration with the business community so that students can sample a variety of occupational areas and base career preferences and plans on actual experience.

- Additional and more appropriate vocational courses should be developed with on-the-job training opportunities supported by employers so that students may learn work skills through instruction geared to their needs and in real as well as simulated settings.

- A comprehensive job training and placement program with ongoing support by adult service providers should be developed jointly by county government, the school system, the adult service providers and the business community. It should enable students to enroll in post-secondary education and training programs and provide career counseling and assistance with finding and obtaining work, as needed.

- Parents and school system staff need more information about the labor market and job requirements so that they can help students plan for the future. Parents and MCPS staff also must have adequate information about adult service providers so that linkages can be established before the student leaves school. The channels of communication between home and school must be improved so that parents can become true partners with the school system in preparing their children for adulthood.

2. Post-secondary Education and Training

At Montgomery College, the Office of Special Student Services coordinates the delivery of support services for students with disabilities enrolled in courses at the college. The Office of Special Student Services on the Rockville Campus serves as a resource to the Germantown and Takoma Park Campuses to ensure that the college's program and activities are accessible to all qualified students with disabilities.

Services include academic, personal, and career counseling; assistance with admissions and registration; liaison with external agencies; faculty liaison; various classroom accommodations; assistance in obtaining interpreters, taped or brailled texts, readers, mobility assistants, notetakers, and other assistive devices.

In addition, the Rockville Campus has a Learning Center Program that is an integral part of the Office of Special Student Services. This program provides Learning Center classes in developmental English, reading, and college survival skills; individual tutoring; study skills training; diagnostic testing; advising; faculty contacts; and Individualized Educational Plans. An advisory committee counsels the college on the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Montgomery College also offers a Handicapped Assistance program, consisting of a series of courses aimed at preparing persons for working with individuals with disabilities.

The MCPS Adult Education Department offers free Adult Basic Education courses for developmentally disabled adults and for persons with low reading skills. There is also a lip reading course for deaf adults that includes consumer skills. In addition, there are courses for adult developmentally disabled persons in work adjustment, nutrition, and assertiveness training for which a fee is charged. For parents, there is a sign language class and several courses on parenting a handicapped child. The MCPS Adult Education Department is capable of developing special fee courses upon demand. The task force did not obtain information on proprietary post-secondary training opportunities.

3. Adult Employment and Employment Training Programs

The task force gathered information on 17 agencies which provide a range of employment and job training services including assessment, remedial education, job development, and job support. Highlights of the findings include:

- Services are generally provided for more severely disabled individuals and often in segregated settings.
- Private agencies in the county have eligibility criteria for services which are, for the most part, determined by the funding source; persons who do not meet the criteria have few service options.
- Many graduating students face agency waiting lists for up to two years or more.
- There is no central entry point into the adult world for students leaving school and no coordinating agency that links service providers with employers.
- There is a need for these agencies and MCPS to communicate in a more routine and systematic way so that the lack of services is not compounded by inadequate information sharing.

4. Ancillary Montgomery County Government Services

A review of the Departments of Health, Social Services, Personnel, and Family Resources revealed that these agencies provide services to eligible persons with disabilities that are vital in transition planning. The Department of Social Services assists in the transition to employment primarily by referring clients to other service providers such as Montgomery County Association for Retarded Citizens (MCARC), Centers for the Handicapped, Inc., and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The Department of Social Services, in collaboration with the Health Department, also operates an Assessment Center where employment needs are addressed as part of an overall assessment plan of care.

The Income Maintenance Program primarily serves persons with disabilities through the General Public Assistance to Employables (GPA-E) Program. Additionally, any handicapped adult receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is automatically eligible for medical assistance. Depending on income and living situation, the handicapped adult may be eligible for food stamps and for General Public Assistance-Limited Time Eligibility (GPA-LTE).

The Department of Family Resources does not provide any direct transition services to clients; however, the Division of Services to Handicapped Individuals does contract with such private, nonprofit agencies as the Montgomery County Association for Retarded Citizens, Centers for the Handicapped, Inc., and Rock Creek Foundation for the provision of community-based services.

The Health Department provides ancillary services such as crippled children services for persons 0-21 years of age and physical therapy for all ages. In addition, mental health services are available both in the Health Department and through contract with community providers such as Community Psychiatric Clinic (CPC) or Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA). Also, school nurses and physicians participate in special education placement activities.

In 1981 a self-identification survey of the Montgomery County Government work force revealed that approximately 7 percent of the employees met the definition of "handicapped" as specified in the county's Affirmative Action Plan. Only .4 percent of the employee population, however, was "severely handicapped.*" The county established a 3 percent employment representation benchmark for severely handicapped individuals. The county Department of Personnel has received $40,000 for FY 86 to place individuals with severe disabilities referred from rehabilitation centers serving Montgomery County residents. Such placements would be non- competitive and non-merit on-the-job training placements throughout the county government. It is expected that successful trainees will be employed by the county.

Two of the most serious gaps perceived by these four agencies are the lack of transition preparation within the school system and the lack of a clearly identifiable place in the community for ongoing support for obtaining and maintaining employment.

5. Business Sector

Forty employers were contacted to ascertain how many persons with disabilities they employ and to identify barriers that employers believe prevent or limit employability. The survey group represented a geographically diverse cross-section in a variety of industries and included businesses ranging in size from 100 to 5,000 employees. Survey results indicate that:

- Far more companies have policies than have programs for employing persons with disabilities. This may indicate that employers would hire persons with disabilities if they had sufficient knowledge and support.

- Employers do not know enough about how to assess the potential of and how to deal with persons with disabilities.

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*As classified by the United States' Equal Opportunity Commission

- Employers do not know where to locate applicants with disabilities.
- The majority of employers are willing to work with public and private adult agencies provided the agencies understand job requirements and the nature of the business.
- Employers appear to value appropriate work attitudes and job skills more than government employment incentives.
- Employers feel that school personnel should know more about the business community and about employer needs.
- Employers feel that while in school students should learn more about the local business community.
- Better communication channels must be established between education, private and public adult services agencies, government, and business.

B. MODEL PROGRAM ELSEWHERE (Index to report in Appendix D)

The task force reviewed 70 existing transition programs within and outside of the United States to identify exemplary practices that could serve as a model for Montgomery County. The reviewed materials form the beginning of a material resource library for use by transition program planners and implementers.

The task force found no single existing program that satisfies all the identified Montgomery County transition needs. Existing programs either do not serve all ages or all disability categories or are lacking in scope or in parent or employer involvement.

Review of these programs enabled the task force to identify the following common characteristics of exemplary programs:

- A cooperative service delivery system that continually involves the resources of vocational education, special education, guidance, and vocational rehabilitation working in collaboration with parents, the business community, government, and community agencies
- Viewing the education system as the agent of preparation for work and independent living through social skills training and an employment oriented curriculum, long-term planning for the student, and an emphasis on the experiential
- Training and job placement in nonsegregated, community environments with an emphasis on normalizing and "real job" experiences
- Employer needs identified and met through the use of employer specific training projects, task analysis and restructuring, fulfillment of job requirements for as long as necessary through one-on-one, on-the-job support and intensive work-site supervision
- Continuous employer involvement in design of training, implementation of employment service procedures, and oversight and evaluation of program effectiveness

- Trained and motivated personnel in the roles of counselors, job developers, case managers, job coaches, employment advocates, and other staff positions

- An emphasis on achieving a high level of public understanding and public awareness through continuing outreach to families and community

- A vision of transition that incorporates creative, flexible, nontraditional approaches guided by ongoing program evaluation

- Dynamic, motivated, dedicated, diplomatic, experienced, and innovative leaders

- A strong philosophical base which guides transition programming at all levels, incorporating attitudes and service methodology which foster self-respect, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-determination

C. LEGISLATION (Index to report in Appendix E)

The task force reviewed existing state, local, and federal laws and regulations to propose legislative initiatives that would broaden the support for transition of persons with disabilities.

The task force analyzed 14 statutes and regulations, among them laws governing the education of handicapped children, vocational education, rehabilitation, human relations, job training, developmental disabilities, tax credits, and proposed legislation in the Maryland General Assembly.

A detailed report was written, analyzing each act's purpose, provisions, eligibility criteria and other aspects pertinent to transition. Also developed were a series of comprehensive recommendations to focus on issues that could be addressed through changes in legislation.

Highlights of issues follow:

- While legislative variety provides potential options for services, it nevertheless imposes a burden on persons with disabilities. Frequently, they are the ones most vulnerable to the pressures of time and information overload. The state should lobby Congress to clarify existing eligibility requirements. By so doing, it would both relieve the state of a burden it should not have to assume and force a redefinition more in keeping with current knowledge about transition. Eligibility requirements should be made uniform from one act to another and from one agency to another.

- The federal government should continue to reexamine the suspension of benefits, following job placement for persons with disabilities. These benefits should be open to reassignment without delay if the worker is no longer employed. Specific benefits should also be maintained where current earnings are insufficient to cover the lost benefits.

- Performance requirements and training costs are a major problem for some agency personnel. In most legislation, training costs and job placement are critical measures of agency success. People with severe disabilities are frequently viewed as jeopardizing successful placement. Therefore, adequate

funds for training should be included, and agency performance standards should be reviewed and possibly revised to reflect more realistic placement targets for each agency.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on these findings, the task force concluded that the following direct services are needed:

1. Academic, career and vocational education to prepare all special education students for adult life (Limited availability at present time)

2. Flexibility and adaptations in post secondary job training programs designed for the general population so that they can serve special education graduates who can benefit from them (Very limited at present time)

3. Generic employment services with flexibility and adaptations to serve a wider range of persons with disabilities (Very limited availability)

4. Intake mechanism for referral to services for graduates (No comprehensive service now available)

5. On-going service coordination when needed (Now available only for some clients)

6. Specialized training in work habits and skills (Limited availability)

7. Specialized job training, including on-the-job training (OJT) (Limited availability)

8. Specialized employment services with short-term follow-up (Very limited availability)

9. Long-term supported employment services (Extremely limited availability)

10. Service to employers (public and business) for job adaptation and restructuring and for orientation of supervisors (Very limited availability)

11. Centralized job and employer development and information service, i.e., "job bank" (Not available)

The task force further concluded to bring about these services, the following are needed:

- Coordination and consistent direction for the activities of MCPS, Montgomery County Government, adult service providers, parents and employers

- A mechanism for linking all concerned sectors

- Action by county government to obtain funds for expansion of the above direct services

- Input from business so that transition services will be responsive to business requirements

- Business aid in terms of job opportunities and financial support
- Efforts towards needed regulatory and administrative changes and to obtain needed funds
- Public information to enlist support for transition goals

It was evident to the task force that no piecemeal effort would suffice to address all the identified needs. The critical analysis of existing transition efforts in other communities convinced the task force that only a comprehensive effort would fulfill its charge. Therefore, the task force recommends creation of two systems: 1) an MCPS system to prepare special education students for employment and for linking them and their parents to post-secondary services and employment and 2) a countywide system of post-secondary transition services for which the Montgomery County government should assume primary responsibility. In addition to the two systems, a mechanism should be created to assure continued progress and consistency of direction. This mechanism should provide coordination and communication within the two systems and between the two systems and the many government agencies, service providers, parents, consumers and employers who play an important part in the transition process.

The chapters that follow contain recommendations to MCPS and to the Montgomery County Government. Priority action recommendations, including options for creating a coordinating mechanism are included.

V. THE ROLE OF MCPS IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS

A. INTRODUCTION

It is clear that the school system has the major responsibility for the first phase of transition, i.e., for preparing all special education students for work and life in the community and for linking them to posthigh school services. To perform the transition function adequately, it is also evident that the school system needs parent, community, and employer involvement, as well as legislative and funding support from county and state government. The recommendations for preparation for employment that follow consist of a mission statement, followed by an overall need statement, a description of the recommended system, with detailed objectives for each system component, and action recommendations.

B. TRANSITION MISSION OF MCPS

MCPS should provide comprehensive, systemwide programs and services to enable all special education students to make a successful transition from school to meaningful work and community participation.

C. NEED

About 800 special education students graduate from MCPS each June. While some may have relatively few difficulties in going on to further education or in finding work, studies and experience show that unemployment and underemployment

is extremely high for these graduates as a whole. Nationally, it is estimated that between 50 and 80 percent of working age adults who report a disability are jobless.[1] No follow-up data exist[2] on all MCPS special education graduates, but the data that do exist show that many students have extreme difficulties in entering the work force and in remaining employed or in obtaining appropriate employment support services.

Graduates tend to lack adequate basic skills, job-seeking skills, work skills, and appropriate work behaviors. Few students have had useful on-the-job training experiences. Most students with severe disabilities have few, if any, community work experiences essential to preparing them for work.

For many students with disabilities, few if any options are available for pursuing education beyond high school. Many do not know how to make effective use of generally available adult services nor how to find special services available to adults with disabilities. Parents are uninformed about work or education options for their children and about available services. Service providers are not well informed about school services and about potential client needs because there is no effective linking mechanism.

Employers do not know where to find job applicants who are disabled nor how to obtain the services that would help them adapt the job to the abilities of the applicant. As a result of these shortcomings, many special education graduates cannot find or keep meaningful jobs that provide adequate compensation in terms of income, job satisfaction, and opportunity for personal growth and independence.

For the most severely handicapped graduates, there are not enough medical/social day programs. Their only option is to stay at home. This has often a devastating effect on the entire family. More information on the nationwide unemployment problem of persons with disabilities can be found in Appendix G.

D. COMPONENTS OF THE TRANSITION SYSTEM

In the judgment of the task force, MCPS should create a transition service delivery system with four components: 1). planning 2). instruction 3). linking and 4). staff development. The staff development component undergirds the entire system. The system should exhibit characteristics of exemplary programs identified by the task force, and listed on page 12.

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1. U.S. Commission of Civil Rights, 1983.

2. Of the 1979-82 mentally retarded and multiply handicapped graduates, only about 20 percent were employed, according to the report by the Superintendent's Task Force on the Future of the Schools for the Moderately and Severely/Profoundly Mentally Retarded.

   A Department of Educational Accountability study of 175 Level 5 1983 graduates shows that more than 30 percent are unemployed.

Planning Component

1.0 The purpose of the planning component is to expand special education students' awareness of the range of postschool options and to enable them and their parents to make informed choices. The planning component should have the following objectives:

1.1 To prepare special education students for thinking about themselves as workers and for setting long-range goals, students should have many opportunities from kindergarten on for exploring different work settings and occupations.

1.2 To prepare students and their families for making decisions about the future, guidance and counseling should be provided through daily classroom activities and through regular and specialized guidance services.

1.3 At the equivalent of the eighth grade level, and every year thereafter, the annual IEP planning process should be extended to focus on postschool academic or vocational training and employment goals. The student's instructional program should then be geared to IEP objectives that prepare the student for postschool goals. Parents, students, services providers, and employers should be involved in IEP planning, as appropriate, and in the evaluation of instructional outcomes.

Instructional Component

2.0 The purpose of the instructional component is to develop skills and behaviors in students that will contribute to their ability to work as productively and function as independently as possible as adults. Classroom instruction should be complemented by community-based instruction and students should have opportunity to practice these skills and behaviors on work sites and in real life situations. The instructional component, taking into consideration individual functional needs of students, should have the following objectives:

2.1 All special education students, including those who are preparing for post-secondary education, should have the opportunity to acquire basic survival and world of work information and skills.

2.2 MCPS should develop a continuum of academic and vocational instruction that can realistically prepare all special education students for work. This should include vocational offerings, regular vocational classes and courses, modified vocational courses and on-the-job training, and the academic instruction needed for these classes. Where appropriate, the existing Program of Studies, as well as such programs as the Work-Oriented Curriculum (WOC) and the Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) program, should be used and adapted.

2.3 Where appropriate, qualified special education students should be encouraged to participate in the full range of academic courses leading to admission to post-secondary academic institutions.

2.4 College-bound special education students should not only acquire academic skills but should also be prepared for post-secondary education through on-campus orientation activities.

2.5 MCPS should make available instruction-oriented on-the-job opportunities for all students who need it. Special education students should receive coaching on their adjustment to the demands of the job and the work environment. Because instruction is a developmental process, students should have opportunities to move ahead as they learn work skills.

2.6 On-the-job instruction in real work environment should be an integral or major part of vocational preparation for students who have difficulty in transfer of learning.

2.7 For students with severe disabilities in particular, teacher-directed vocational experiences in integrated community settings should complement the school-based instructional program several years before graduation.

Linking Component

3.0 The purpose of the linking component is twofold: 1) to connect students and their parents with community adult service providers before graduation and 2) to create relationships with employers that lead to increased employment for special education graduates. The linking component should have the following objectives:

3.1 MCPS should enlist employers and adult services providers to help plan career and vocational programs to assure that school programs will serve the postgraduate needs of students as well as employers.

3.2 MCPS should assist parents and students to become more knowledgeable about the labor market and job requirements so that they can plan realistically for the future.

3.3 MCPS should inform parents about adult services so that they and their children can use special services for persons with disabilities as well as those available to all citizens.

3.4 MCPS should link parents whose sons and daughters will need ongoing services to adult services providers well before their children leave school. Early and frequent contact should create the linkages that students and their parents need when students graduate.

3.5 MCPS should refer parents to parent support programs so that parents will have the information and support they need to foster independence in their children.

3.6 MCPS should enable service providers to anticipate service needs by involving them in IEP planning for students who may need ongoing services several years before the student graduates.

3.7 MCPS, employers, and adult service providers should collaborate in arranging work experiences for students.

3.8 MCPS should assist adult service providers in orienting students and their parents prior to graduation to the nature and availability of their services.

3.9 MCPS should continue to expand relationships with public and private employers so that MCPS programs will become more responsive to employer concerns and needs.

3.9.1 MCPS should involve employers in planning instructional programs for special education students so that students will acquire the skills that employers seek.

3.9.2 School systems personnel should have accurate knowledge of employer job specifications and other employment requirements.

3.9.3 MCPS should assist employers to gain accurate knowledge of the abilities and the potential of persons with disabilities as well as about incentives, reasonable accommodations, job restructuring and support services available to employers.

3.9.4 MCPS should work with employers so that they will increase their support for job development and job placement activities.

Staff Development Component

4.0 The purpose of the staff development component is to provide comprehensive staff training so that appropriate staff will have the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the comprehensive transition system. The staff development component should have the following objectives:

4.1 A comprehensive in-service program should be based on assessed needs of both professional and supporting staff in both special and regular education. This training should employ all well-known principles of good in-service training, such as staff involvement in the training plan, observation of successful programs, evaluations, and follow-up support during implementation.

4.2 Staff should be able to set optimally realistic and reasonable expectations for students and base their advice about further training, work goals, and career possibilities on these expectations.

4.3 Staff should become cognizant of post-secondary educational options and guide students into appropriate programs.

4.4 Staff should obtain thorough and current knowledge of work opportunities and work requirements so that they can teach students the functional skills and behaviors needed on the job. Teachers should be able to accompany and work with students at the work experience site and thereby acquire information about skill gaps that will dictate classroom reinforcement instruction.

4.5 Staff should become familiar with both generic and specialized adult services and refer students to the appropriate agencies in a timely manner.

4.6 Staff should become knowledgeable about employment barriers so that they can strive to remove them as well as teach students to become self-advocates.

E. ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS TO MCPS

To develop and implement this recommended system of transition services, MCPS should take the following steps:

1. By October 1, 1985, establish and staff a full-time transition coordinator position with sufficient authority to obtain the cooperation of all pertinent MCPS units. The whole effort should have the expressed support of the Board of Education and the superintendent.

2. The transition coordinator should appoint a steering committee by November 1, 1985, to provide interdisciplinary and interagency advice on all activities. Committee members should include representatives from regular, special and vocational education, staff development, guidance, and the MCPS Department of Personnel Services, as well as parents, representatives of adult service providers, and employers.

3. The steering committee should develop a process to consult with staff and the community groups represented by the steering committee to ensure broad-based support for all transition activities.

4. The transition coordinator, in collaboration with selected staff groups and with the advice of the steering committee should develop the recommended transition system model for approval by the superintendent by no later than February 1, 1986. Program information collected by the task force should be used in developing the system.

5. The transition coordinator, in collaboration with the steering committee, should develop a collaborative process for determining unmet needs in relation to the transition model and should recommend and get approval for prioritized implementation plans. These plans should include comprehensive and ongoing staff development needed to implement the system. They should also include outcome measures for each objective and a process for monitoring and evaluation. Evaluation results should be reported to the superintendent annually.

6. Implementation plans should include realistic budgets and time lines.

7. MCPS should offer more On-the-Job-Training slots, and job-site supervisors should provide follow-along for teachers so that they can supervise students adequately. Where possible, successful graduates of such programs should be employed by MCPS.

8. To chart the progress of transition efforts, MCPS follow-up studies of special education graduates should obtain qualitative as well as quantitative data on graduates, e.g., post-secondary training, type of jobs, hours worked, wages and agencies involved.

9. To implement the parent objectives of the linking component, systematic support should be offered to parents no later than June, 1986. MCPS, in cooperation with existing community groups, should help parents make timely educational decisions and determine and attain postschool options for their sons and daughters. Workshops, whether offered by MCPS or by other agencies in collaboration with MCPS, should be planned so that they are accessible and understandable to all parents.

10. To implement the adult services providers objectives of the system, MCPS should view the adult education and services providers community as an important resource and should create an effective, mutually agreed upon working relationship.

11. To implement the employer objectives of the system, MCPS should develop a plan to expand its present relationships with the business community so that employers become increasingly aware of the benefits of employing individuals with disabilities and become more responsive to their needs. MCPS should base work-related instruction, On-Job-Training activities, and adaptations to vocational courses on employer expertise so that employers would find it advantageous to employ more MCPS special education graduates.

F. PRIORITIES FOR FY 86

During FY 86 initial priority should be given to the following:

a) **Include career/employability components in IEP planning initially for eighth grade Level 4 and 5 students (and as soon as possible for all special education students.)**

b) **Focus instruction for Level 4 and 5 students on social skill goals in their IEPs, and provide training for teachers in how to use existing social skills curriculum materials.**

c) **Provide job counseling for Level 4 and 5 students graduating in 1986 and 1987 which would assure that they and their parents are linked to post-secondary services, as needed.**

d) **Review the IEPs of all 11th and 12th grade special education students and provide work experience programs for those who need them, to the extent that resources are available and program adjustments can be made.**

e) **Develop in-school work experience sites and, where resources permit, offer community work experiences.**

VI. THE ROLE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS

A. INTRODUCTION

Transition, says Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Madeleine Will, is a period that includes high school, the point of graduation, additional post-secondary education or adult services, and the initial years of employment. She goes on to say that the traditional view of transition as a special linking service between school and adult opportunities is insufficient and that we must recognize transition as a shared responsibility of all involved parties. The task force solidly agrees with this expanded concept of transition.

Based on this concept, the task force concluded that as MCPS is viewed as the agent for beginning the transition process for students with disabilities, the Montgomery County Government is viewed as the agent for planning and coordinating the resources necessary for needed post-secondary transition. Therefore, the task force believes that the county government should assume the lead role in assuring that adequate post-secondary services exist.

B. TRANSITION MISSION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The county government should provide the overall leadership for implementation of a comprehensive and cooperative transition system providing post-secondary education, job training and employment, services to special education graduates. This system should be based on effective interagency communication and a coordinated approach to program planning and service delivery and should include the resources of education, county government, state government, and adult service providers. The system should also involve parents and seek the resources of the business community. The system should exhibit the characteristics of exemplary programs, identified by the task force, and listed on page 12.

C. NEED

Planning and Coordination

Montgomery County does not have a complete system for planning and delivering the continuum of transition services. The agents of transition, e.g., MCPS, county government, and community agencies, do not communicate adequately with each other, nor do they fully involve parents and the business community. As a result, the range of needs of all students with disabilities is not met.

Gaps in Services

Central Point of Entry

There is a need to centralize referrals to post-secondary services so that students and their parents know where to seek help. Employers also need a centralized resource to find potential employees with disabilities.

Post-secondary Education

For many students with disabilities, few if any options are available for pursuing education beyond high school. Post-secondary institutions do not have the same comprehensive federal mandate to educate individuals with disabilities as the school system does and therefore may not be sufficiently sensitive to their needs. Moreover, channels of communication between secondary and post-secondary institutions are inadequate. Also, communication between post-secondary institutions and adult services providers and employers is limited and must be improved. The transition process must also consider those special education students who enter post-secondary education, whether they complete the program or drop out, because they, too, have difficulty in making the transition to employment. This issue is virtually unexplored and needs further analysis.

Employment Support

Some students with disabilities leave school without further transition needs. Many can find jobs but can not keep their jobs because there is no employment support service that they can turn to to mediate employer/employee problems. Furthermore, the need for transition services is often ongoing. The graduate may be placed in a job but looses it and needs help in finding a new one. A person may need help in moving from a low level job to one that is more challenging or better suited to the individual. These services are not generally available. For many students, the transition process is interrupted because funding and services are insufficient and graduates must wait for a year or more to enroll in community vocational training and employment programs. Without such services, many never obtain work or places in training programs and stay at home where they lose the competencies gained in school. They also lose the impetus for working.

Moreover, for MCPS graduates with severe disabilities, there are not enough work opportunities outside of segregated settings. Experience has shown that their work potential increases substantially in a less restrictive environment.

Medical/Social Day Programs

Some severely handicapped graduates require intensive care and support. Work is not an option for them. In some cases, parents cannot find adequate care and have to quit work to look after their adult children. This has often had a devastating effect on the entire family. More programs that offer medical day support are needed, with opportunities for participants' personal development and services such as physical and speech therapy.

Business Community

Employers need to know how to assess the potential of persons with disabilities as well as how to accommodate their disabling condition. Employers are concerned that education, government, and community agency staff do not understand the needs of the business community and that business is not adequately involved in transition planning and services delivery. Furthermore, employers believe that students with disabilities are not learning enough in school about the world of work and related job requirements.

Laws and Regulations

Although laws, regulations, and administrative procedures are aimed at furthering the employment of persons with disabilities, programmatic restrictions and legal disincentives impede the transition process. Presently, there is no coordinated effort among the agents of transition to remove these impediments. A unified approach is needed to attain statutory and regulatory improvements.

D. COMPONENTS OF THE TRANSITION SYSTEM

The task force believes that the Montgomery County Government should create a transition service delivery system with the following four components: 1) planning and coordination; 2) program expansion and improvement; 3) business linkages; and 4) legislative advocacy.

Planning and Coordination Component

1.0 The purpose of planning and coordination is to develop and implement a system of post-secondary transition services which assist high school graduates with disabilities to obtain further education and training to prepare for employment, to obtain employment, and to maintain employment. (See transition model, pages 5, 6 and 7) The planning and coordination component should have the following objectives:

1.1 Identify program gaps by developing a collaborative needs assessment process involving all services providers, state government, students and their families, and employers

1.2 Coordinate planning efforts to assure that plans meet identified needs

1.3 Promote cooperation on transition planning and service delivery through interagency agreements

1.4 Monitor the general performance of the transition system and coordinate the implementation of improvements

1.5 In collaboration with relevant agencies and advocacy groups conduct an intensive coordinated marketing and public awareness campaign designed to disseminate information about the employability of persons with disabilities

1.6 Identify and cultivate community leaders who can advocate on behalf of transition issues.

Program Expansion and Improvement Component

2.0 The purpose of program expansion and improvement is to assure that all graduating students with disabilities who need post-secondary education, employment, and job training assistance or medical/social day program receive appropriate services. These services should be of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the complete transition needs of all graduating students with disabilities. Program expansion and improvement is described here in four sections: 1) Central Point of Entry 2) Post-secondary Education 3) Employment Support and 4) Medical/Social Day Programs.

Creating A Central Point of Entry

2.1.0 The purpose of creating a central point of entry is to link graduating/graduated special education students and their parents to post-secondary education, employment, and job training services; and to assist employers to find prospective employees with disabilities. The central point of entry should have the following objectives:

2.1.1 In collaboration with MCPS, develop and implement a process for linking special education students and their parents with services providers before graduation so that these providers can plan for anticipated service needs, e.g., assessment, job training, job placement, job support, and medical/social day services. This service would reduce the confusion and resulting time delays among students with disabilities and their parents regarding post-secondary services.

2.1.2 Provide assistance to employers to find job applicants with disabilities through a central unit of services coordination, using state-of-the-art technology

Post-secondary Educational Program Expansion

2.2.0 The purpose of expanding post-secondary education opportunities is to increase options for special education students to attend college, adult education or proprietary occupational education programs. Post-secondary education expansion should have the following objectives:

2.2.1 Assess the problems that special education graduates have in pursuing post-secondary educational goals

2.2.2 Develop linkages with Montgomery College, the MCPS Department of Adult Education, and other post-secondary educational institutions and assist them in adapting their programs, where appropriate, to the needs of individuals with disabilities

Expansion of Employment and Job Services

2.3.0 The purpose of expanding employment support services is to assure that all MCPS graduates with disabilities have the support they need to prepare themselves and obtain work in nonsegregated environments, to maintain themselves on the job, and to make job changes, where indicated. Expansion of employment support services should have the following objectives:

2.3.1 Provide technical assistance and training to appropriate representatives of education, adult services agencies, and the business community

2.3.2 In collaboration with the Maryland Department of Employment and Training, develop and provide labor market information to education and community agencies to enhance the process of matching disabled persons to suitable occupations

2.3.3 Improve the job development/placement process such as coordinating the creation of a job bank for disabled job seekers

2.3.4 Develop transition demonstration projects to implement better ways of employing disabled persons

2.3.6 Expand incentives to private agencies to ensure development of transitional work programs in the least restrictive environment

2.3.7 Coordinate with public human services agencies, i.e., DFR, DSS, Health Department, DVR, etc., to improve and increase ancillary services required to support the transition of individuals with disabilities

2.3.8 Enable community agencies providing generic employment and job training services to serve more disabled persons more effectively

2.3.9 Collaborate with MCPS and community service agencies and the business sector to increase significantly the work experience/ on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities for students with disabilities during and after high school.

Expansion of Medical/Social Day Programs

2.4.0 The purpose of expanding medical/social day programs is to assure that sufficient day services exist for individuals whose disability is so severe that work is not a realistic option. Medical/social day program expansion should have the following objectives:

2.4.1 Obtain sufficient funds to provide needed day programs for all Montgomery County severely and profoundly handicapped individuals, including transportation to these programs

2.4.2 Assure that medical/social day programs provide opportunities for personal development of its clients and for their increased acceptance as members of the community

Business Linkages Component

3.0 The purpose of improving linkages with the business community is to increase employer input into program planning, to obtain more work experience job sites, and to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities; and to provide assistance to employers in identifying and hiring persons with disabilities. The business linkages component should have the following objectives:

3.1 Assist employers to identify and assess the employability of disabled students

3.2 Assist employers to adapt hiring, job training and job supervision practices, and to restructure jobs to accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities

3.3 Assist employers to maintain employees with disabilities on the job by providing such services as job coaching or long term employment supports

3.4 With employer collaboration, promote better understanding of job requirements and business practices among students, parents, educators, government, and community services providers

3.5 Increase the awareness of the business community of the potentials of students with disabilities as contributing members of the local work force

Legislative Advocacy Component

4.0 The purpose of legislative advocacy is to advise all levels of government on how to enhance transition by improving or instituting laws, regulations and administrative procedures. The legislative advocacy component should have the following objectives:

4.1 In collaboration with MCPS, state government, and adult services providers, develop new resources and reallocate existing funding to close the gaps in transition services

4.1.2 Work with the county's delegation to the Maryland General Assembly to expand funding by the state to Montgomery County for transitional employment services, including employment follow-up and supported employment

4.1.3 Expand funding by the state to Montgomery County for medical/social day programs

4.1.4 Expand funding for transitional employment services in order to reduce program waiting lists

4.1.5 Expand Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services so that DVR counselors can work with students with disabilities while they are still in school

4.2 In collaboration with community agencies, work with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to attempt to change the state waiting list priority system to achieve greater local control and to eliminate current funding restrictions

4.3 Coordinate efforts with MCPS, adult services providers, parents, and advocacy groups to monitor legislation and attendant regulations and to promote needed changes

4.4 Advocate elimination of income support programs disincentives

4.5 Advocate improvement of laws protecting persons with disabilities from employment discrimination

4.6 Advocate the clarification of differing and confusing eligibility standards of existing programs

4.7 Advocate modification of performance standards of generic employment and job training programs to increase participation of disabled students

4.8 Advocate more local control over expenditures and placement decisions

E. THE NEED FOR A COORDINATING MECHANISM

Given the recommended mission of county government, the task force concludes that a prerequisite for accomplishing this mission is the creation of a coordinating agency. The task force believes that the county government has three options to create this mechanism:

1. Create a transition services unit within County Government using county/MCPS staff to plan and coordinate the delivery of transition services

2. Develop a request for proposal (RFP) and use the County's procurement process to contract out the functions of planning and coordinating the delivery of transition services

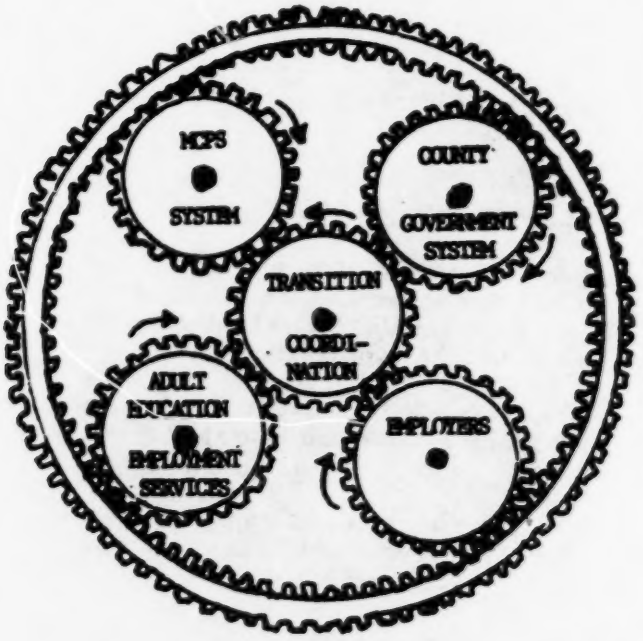
3. Help fund and support a public nonprofit corporation to coordinate the planning and delivery of transition services

The first two options are self explanatory. The third option which the task force favors is less well defined and the task force went to some length to describe it more fully. Some of the details are presented here with more in the complete report.

The task force believes that the function of the nonprofit corporation should be to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate the actions required to reach the transition goal. It should be governed by a governing board that would have responsibility for establishing, implementing, and monitoring policy, and one or more advisory panels that would provide advice on professional and programmatic needs. The governing board would represent business, industry, finance, academia, and the professions. The advisory panel(s) would represent parents, special education, rehabilitation, adult service providers, and employers. The corporation could respond quickly to requests for proposals, accept contributions of funds, services, or materials, and engage in creative cooperative efforts with other organizations. Initial funding for staff could come from county monies targeted for transition use. Additional "loaned" staff could be sought from MCPS, the county, the state DVR, and corporations such as IBM which have executive loan programs. Initial staff would include a director and a secretary/administrative assistant.

The task force has developed sample bylaws, a copy of which is available upon request from the Department of Family Resources. The index of the bylaw can be found in Appendix H.

Whichever option the county chooses, the coodinating agency should undertake activities to augment, expand, modify or support existing government services and maintain a strong link with MCPS. The following diagram attempts to illustrate the task force's view of the integrated transition system.



F. ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

To develop and implement this system the Montgomery County Government should take the following steps:

1. The county executive should appoint a steering committee by October 1, 1985, to provide technical support/interagency advice to the Department of Family Resources on how to create a coordinating mechanism. Committee members should include representatives from MCPS, Montgomery College, employers, parents, adult services providers and relevant county departments.

2. A process should be developed by the steering committee by November 1, 1985 to consult with staff and the community groups represented by the steering committee to ensure broad-based support for all transition activities.

3. Montgomery County Government in collaboration with the steering committee should develop the recommended transition coordinating model for approval by the county executive by January 1, 1986.

4. Montgomery County Government, with the advice of the steering committee should determine how to use the $60,000 now in FY 86 designated county government surplus.

5. Montgomery County Government, with the advice of the steering committee should develop a collaborative process for determining unmet needs in relation to the transition model and should recommend prioritized implementation plans.

G. PRIORITIES FOR FY 86

While the task force believes that the creation of a coordinating mechanism is essential, it also recognizes that it will take time to establish a coordinating agency. In the meantime, the task force recommends that, during FY 86, Montgomery County Government give initial priority to the following areas:

- **Coordination**

  1. **Develop and implement uniform admissions procedures for all county funded transition services**

  2. **Develop a single point of entry for individuals needing transition services**

  3. **Set an example by increasing work experience/OJT positions that lead to permanent employment**

  4. **Identify existing employment support services to mediate simple employer/employee problems**

- **Post-secondary Education**

  5. **Assist Montgomery College to adapt college programs to better serve special education graduates**

- **Funding**

  6. **Identify additional county funds for transition services in integrated settings for MCPS special education graduates**

  7. **Establish a process for matching Montgomery County Government funds with transition funds obtained from other sources**

- **Business Linkages**

  8. **Help employers find prospective employees with disabilities who are or who can be trained to become qualified**

  9. **Provide orientation to employers and employees on working effectively with co-workers with disabilities**

  10. **Meet with employer and trade organizations to obtain up-to-date information on employment needs**

  11. **Explore with the business community joint funding possibilities to enhance transition services**

  12. **Explore incentives to business to increase opportunities for work experience and OJT**

  13. **Contract for a professional public relations campaign to encouraging and recognize successful employment of special education graduates**

- **Legislative Advocacy**

  14. **Actively support legislative and regulatory changes that facilitate transition**

  15. **Work with state officials to obtain more funds for transition services**

VII. OUTCOMES

Follow-up studies conducted jointly by MCPS and the Montgomery County Government should measure the transition system's effectiveness. The following is an example of how these studies should indicate goal achievement:

Outcome Measures

Goals	Graduate Follow-up Indicators
Adequate preparation for post-secondary training/careers/work/job maintenance	° More graduates receiving appropriate training ° More graduates employed ° Those employed hold better jobs

Outcome Measures (Continued)

Graduates linked with needed services	• Increased satisfaction of graduates with referrals • More graduates with satisfactory realistic service contracts
Sufficient adult job services	• Fewer people on waiting list • Less time on waiting list
More community placements for inappropriately segregated graduates	• Fewer sheltered placements

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

COMMITTEE TASKS:

1. Specify problem and identify gaps
2. Review model programs and identify programmatic solutions
3. Review legislation and identify legal solutions
4. Guide work of task force

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APPENDIX C

MONTGOMERY COUNTY TRANSITION TASK FORCE

COMMITTEE 1

REPORT ON TRANSITION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

August 1985

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY TRANSITION TASK FORCE

COMMITTEE 2

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APPENDIX E

MONTGOMERY COUNTY TRANSITION TASK FORCE

COMMITTEE 3

REVIEW OF LEGISLATION

August 1985

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APPENDIX F

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adult Service Providers:

Profit or nonprofit organizations providing a range of postsecondary vocational and employment services to persons with disabilities

Assessment:

The process to determine vocational aptitude, occupational interest, and services required for job placement

Career Awareness:

A process to develop awareness of the range of potential occupations so that persons can make decisions about careers

Career Exploration:

The exposure of students to a range of careers and occupations by such means as classroom instruction, sampling, occupational training, or rotating work experience assignments

Competitive Employment:

Paid jobs available in the open labor market

Continuum of Special Education:

A special education service delivery model mandated by the Maryland State Department of Education and consisting of the following six levels:

1. Consultation

   - Consultation is provided to teachers of students in the regular programs; no direct services are provided to student, for example, advice on speech/language development.

2. Itinerant/Resources

   - Students in the regular program receive special services up to one hour/day, for example, physical therapy for 12 minutes or one period with a resource teachers.

3. Resource

   - Students in the regular program receive special services up to three hours/day, for example, two periods of special reading and writing with resource room teacher.

4. Special Class

   - Students attend a special education class in a regular school, with mainstreaming for specific activities

5. Special School

   - Students attend a special school, such as Mark Twain, or the Elementary Learning Centers

   - Students attend satellite classes of special schools that are located in a regular school such as the Mark Twain Satellite at Magruder High School

   - Students attend a school-within-a-school such as the Secondary Learning Center for learning disabled or the Program for Physically Handicapped at Forest Knolls

   - Students attend a nonpublic day school such as Broschart School when MCPS has no appropriate program for them.

6. Residential

   - Students who need 24-hour supervision attend a residential school such as the Benedictine School

Cooperative Work Experience:

A collaborative arrangement between MCPS and employers whereby students receive instruction in regular courses and related vocational preparation by alternating study in school with supervised work outside school.

Developmental Disabilities:

A federal definition from PL 95-602 which means a severe, chronic disability of a person which (A) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments; (B) is manifested before the person attains age 22; (C) is likely to continue indefinitely; (D) results in substantial functional limitations . . . of major life activity . . .; and (E) reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services which are lifelong or of extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

Employment Barriers:

Structural problems combined with social attitudes which impede the obtaining of suitable employment for persons with disabilities.

Generic Services:

Services, such as transportation, employment and training, recreation, housing, and so on, which generally are available to all citizens.

GPA-E: (General Public Assistance - Employable)

Financial assistance for adults without dependent children who must register for work monthly with the Maryland Job Service as a condition of their grant.

IEP:

Individualized education program which describes the annual goals and objectives for students in special education programs and which is jointly developed by professionals, parents, and where appropriate, the students.

Income Support Program Disincentives:

Regulations of public financial assistance programs, such as Social Security Supplemental Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, Aid to Families With Dependent Children, and so on, which discourage recipients from becoming employed by cutting off income maintenance services prematurely.

Job Bank:

A centralized system whereby applicants with disabilities are matched with appropriate job openings.

Job Coach:

An individual from an agency or employer who provides intensive time-limited on-site support to a new employee with disabilities.

Job Development:

A systematic effort to solicit and process employer job openings for the purpose of placing program/project participants in jobs.

Job Follow-up:

Planned contact with employers and/or clients after job placement.

Job Modification:

A process for accommodating individuals with disabilities by considering their special skills and aptitudes; for example, a full-time job is completed by two or more workers who contribute different skills to its performance; a blind planner would dictate plans instead of writing them.

Labor Market Information:

Information about the decline, stability, or increase of occupations in a given area. Labor market information considers such factors as trends in industry, the number of jobs in a given occupation versus the numbers of persons employed in that occupation, job turnover, or occupational trends. To be used by job seekers to develop a realistic job training and job search plan.

Least Restrictive Environment:

An as-close-to-normal-as-possible school or work setting where persons with disabilities can function successfully and where they can learn or work with their nondisabled peers.

Medical/Social Programs:

Highly supervised and meaningful daytime activity program for persons with severe disabilities, aimed at enhancing socialization, self-care, and general living skills.

On-the-Job Training (OJT):

A program where students get paid the going rate for acquiring job skills in the work site. The employer receives some reimbursement for participants' wages during a specified training period.

Performance Standards:

Quantifiable program objectives established by a granting agency that must be met by the recipient to retain funding; for example, X number of program enrollments or X number of participants placed in jobs.

Prevocational Training:

Helping clients practice basic work habits and attitudes (that is, attendance, punctuality, quantity of work, relation to fellow workers, supervision, and so on) in a supportive environment.

Reasonable Accommodation:

The provision of necessary adaptations to enable a qualified applicant with disabilities to perform the essential functions of a job. The categories of adaptations are the following:

- Structural
- Modification of the job through changes in equipment, work schedule, and work area

Remedial Education:

Basic education in reading, writing, and arithmetic for persons who have insufficient literacy skills to succeed on the job.

Sheltered Workshop:

A segregated and highly supervised worksetting for persons with disabilities.

Subcontract Work:

A program in which the adult service organization obtains work (such as assembly work, mailings, packaging, janitorial, and grounds maintenance) through a contract from local businesses. Work is done for a prearranged fee, out of which the program participants are paid according to their productivity.

Support/Ancillary Services:

Stipends or other cash payments and/or assistance to participants, such as transportation, translation services, rehabilitation, child care, health services, and so on, enabling them to participate in training programs and to maintain employment.

Supported Employment:

Long term on-site supervision by a job coach or rehabilitation counselor to support individuals with severe disabilities so that they can work in a competitive work environment.

Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC):

A credit available to any employer who pays federal income tax and hires certain handicapped or disadvantaged persons or students enrolled in cooperative education programs. The credit is a percentage of the first $6,000 in wages paid per year during the employee's first two years of employment. In the first year of employment, the credit is 50 percent; in the second year, it is 25 percent of the wages paid.

Work Adjustment Training:

Clients perform paid or unpaid work in an actual work setting (in-house or in the community,) to develop, strengthen and maintain essential job habits and interpersonal skills. The major difference between this and prevocational or vocational skill training is that work adjustment training is performed in a work-like environment.

Work-Oriented Curriculum:

An MCPS integrated program for economically and/or academically disadvantaged students of on-the-job training and classroom instruction designed to combine academic learning with students' vocational objectives.

501(c)(3):

Refers to the section of the Internal Revenue Service code which defines a type of not-for-profit organization.

APPENDIX G

EVIDENCE OF NEED

U.S. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Between 50 and 80 percent of working-age adults who report a disability are jobless (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1983; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982). Without employment, many individuals turn to community services only to find long waiting lists. Those adults with disabilities who do gain entry into publicly supported day or vocational services often experience low wages, slow movement toward employment, and segregation from their nondisabled peers (U.S. Department of Labor, 1979).

The cost of joblessness and dependence due to disabilities is high and rising. Approximately 8 percent of the annual gross national product is spent on disability programs, with most of this for programs that support dependence (White House Working Group on Disability Policy, 1983). Public investment in special education can do much to prevent this dependence and lead to full community participation if systematic attention is given to the transition of youth with disabilities from school to work and adult life.

The U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) has responded to this need by establishing a national priority on improving the transition from school to working life for all individuals with disabilities.

Upon leaving public schools, individuals enter a world where there is competition for scarce employment opportunities, a confusing array of service providers and funding agencies, and differing eligibility requirements. Students in transition from school to work leave a somewhat organized although insufficient provider system and enter a complex world that is not fully understood by most education professionals, much less parents or students. But because of the wide variation in type and intensity of handicapping conditions, variety of services is necessary to offer opportunities for normal adult living and working to all individuals with disabilities. Effective transition requires community opportunities and services that can be developed and combined to fit individual circumstances and needs.

Many school systems are working on the transition issue. The Montgomery County Transition Task Force has reviewed 7) of these programs within and outside the United States. No one program appears to satisfy all the transition needs identified in Montgomery County. Existing programs either do not serve all ages or categories of disability, or they lack scope and parent or employer involvement. However, it will be possible to use and adapt program components to create a Montgomery County program.

APPENDIX H

TRANSITION COORDINATING AGENCY

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